

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

VOLUME XXIII.

ASHLAND, O., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1901.

No. 6

Editorial

Truth Seekers

There are certainly a very great number of them, and always have been, men and women who have persistently sought for the truth, of some kind or other, who are seeking for it today, and value it above all other treasure. But what kind of truth? There is a multitude which no man can number who are earnestly seeking for *financial* truth, that knowledge of facts and principles which points the way to the palace of opulence. In this sphere of human interest and activity as well as in the more spiritual, men fail because they believe a lie. We often remark upon the business sagacity of a successful man. What is that sagacity but a quality of judgment which enables its possessor to discern the *truth*, and to separate it from the untruth, the unreal, the lie, the false guide. Find the truth in all that realm of cause and effect in financial matters, and you will "arrive" every time. Nothing under the sun is surer than the rewards of the truth finder, and this is so universally recognized in material matters that it would be difficult to find a man who is not an ardent and earnest and honest seeker for that kind of truth. A man may believe a moral or a spiritual lie from preference, but there are very few indeed who will believe and act upon a financial lie if they know it.

There is another and smaller class who are earnestly seeking for *social* truth, or the truth in regard to our relations one to another, to the community, to the State. This is a great problem, and it is exercising the noblest minds. First, to find what are the absolutely true, and hence righteous and benevolent, relations which should exist between the classes, between capital and labor, for example, between the governed and the governing, between the individual and his neighbors. In this sphere of truth seeking and truth finding rankles the lie of the saloon, the lie of extreme poverty and the lie of enormous wealth, and other lies which are working infinite mischief. Let there be no confusion of terms. This saloon, this poverty, this wealth, are facts, but at the same time they are *lies*, because they contravene that fundamental truth, or true relation, which alone brings equity, justice, equality, universal prosperity, and happiness.

Again there are seekers after *ecclesiastical* truth, or the true relation between different denominations, or the integral societies of the same denomination. This is a wide field, in which it is generally recognized that there is as yet much dimness, much groping in the dark, much necessity for earnest and persistent seeking before we find the true relation, the true basis of co-operation. Much progress has been made in this direction, but much remains to be done. It hasn't been long since the various brotherhoods of the

one Universal Brotherhood were flinging mud upon each other's garments, and dust in the eyes of the world. Inter-denominational wars were carried on with all the unfairness, the animosity, and sometimes with the lying, which is characteristic of a political campaign. The scorn and contempt of the outside world has about put a stop to this folly, and good men and true are now everywhere seeking that basis of unity which exists alone in the absolute truth.

Again there are seekers for truth in *Revelation*, the inner and real meaning of the Word. It is recognized more than ever that the *meaning* of the Word is the *Word*. There ought never to have been a doubt about this. If an unmodified literalism is the vital Word, why bother with a preacher? Why be bored with a sermon? The fact is that the spiritual treasure, the vital truth, is hidden within the word, hence the multitude, the "great number," who are sent both to proclaim and expound. The printed and universally distributed Bible has accomplished the *proclamation* part of the preacher's office, but the duty of explaining and expounding remains as much a necessity as ever. The revealed truth is published as it never was before in the whole history of religion, but until the end of time it will constantly need the illumination of personal knowledge and experience. This leads us to the last division of our subject, which is, Truth in experience, or *personal* truth.

It will be seen how necessary it is to separate between the true and the false in this relation, particularly in regard to those who are the leaders of the people, the shepherds and pastors. The blind can not lead the blind, except into the ditch. We must seek for the true, or the truth, in personal experience. We must know what are the facts with ourselves and in ourselves, and how far the truth has modified those facts. In the foundations of our character are we on the rock of fundamental truth, reality, righteousness, or are we resting on some lie? Is our personal experience of spiritual truth sane and sound? Can we shed a true guiding light out of this experience on the pathway of others?

All these are serious and weighty problems, and lie at the very basis of human character and human destiny. We should go about their solution intelligently, steadfastly, manfully, remembering that "he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Repairing the Saloon

There is a dear friend with whom we love to visit often sitting at the window of his place of business. Just across the street there is a saloon. It is located in an old stone building, one of the oldest buildings in the city. How many times when we were sorrowfully looking upon it have Hawthorne's words, full of meaning, come to us: "Like all that